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## FRANCE.

### CETTE.

By Vice Consul Paul H. Cram, January 29.

The Cette district, which constitutes the Mediterranean region between the Rhone River and the Spanish frontier, includes the Gard, Herault, Aude, and Pyrenees-Orientales Departments. The region has an area of 8,720 square miles, with an estimated population, prior to the war, of 1,425,000 inhabitants. Viniculture and the manipulation of wines, together with the allied industries, are the chief occupations in the district. Among such industries are the manufacture of chemical products and fertilizers for the vineyards, the extraction of crude tartar from wine lees, and the manufacture of wine casks. In fact it may be said that local prosperity is dependent in a very large measure on the returns obtained from this crop.

Throughout 1916, the district enjoyed exceptional prosperity. This may be attributed to several reasons. The prices obtained for wine largely compensated a relatively short crop. The manufacturers of chemical products made important extensions to their plants in order to meet not only the demand for their customary trade but also the ever increasing requirements of the National Government for war material.

The port of Cette was the scene of remarkable activity, which, as a result of concurring economic conditions, assumed unprecedented proportions. The large imports of cereals, both for domestic consumption and for transit to Switzerland, the increasing needs of the army for petroleum essence, the demand for raw material for the ammunition factories, and the imports of wines were the principal elements which contributed to the foregoing result. Owing to the lack of adequate port facilities, many ships bound for Cette were obliged to discharge their cargoes at other ports.

#### General Imports into Cette.

The principal foreign products imported at Cette during 1915 and 1916 are shown in the following table, the quantities being given in metric tons of 2,204.6 pounds.

Articles.	1915	1916	Articles.	1915	1916
Beverages, alcoholic:	<i>Tons.</i>	<i>Tons.</i>		<i>Tons.</i>	<i>Tons.</i>
Wines, ordinary.....	215,569	310,342	Nitrates.....	3,685	36,272
Other.....	15,974	16,344	Petroleum:		
Bread-stuffs:			Crude.....	549	1,013
Barley.....	11,749	22,148	Essence and refined.....	81,943	101,201
Corn.....	13,310	14,250	Residue.....		1,641
Oats.....	30,845	66,217	Phosphates.....	22,122	38,347
Wheat.....	11,015	51,822	Pyrites.....	41,540	36,128
Coal.....	86,113	98,800	Sulphur.....	41,163	71,295
Coal tar.....	29,523	30,891	Wood: Staves.....	1,556	1,815
Fruits:			Vegetables: Potatoes.....	4,125	8,355
Grapes, pressed.....	5,713	6,181	All other articles.....	18,715	94,888
Lemons and oranges.....	6,486	32,866	Total.....	712,831	1,067,191
Metals:					
Lead.....	1,080	5,199			
Iron.....	40,329	11,850			
Zinc, tin, and nickel.....		3,866			

The above statistics cover the general imports with the exception of merchandise imported through this port in transit to Switzerland.

Owing to its proximity to Spain and Algeria, Cette is essentially a wine port. Under normal conditions the volume of imports are in inverse ratio to the size of the local wine crop. However, in 1916 the important increase in the imports is attributed not only to unfavorable crop conditions, but also to a larger consumption and to the receipts at Cette of large quantities of Algerian wines which were formerly shipped direct to Rouen. For these reasons wines remained the principal item in the list of Cette imports. The necessity of supplying larger quantities of fertilizer and fungicide to the vine growers is reflected in the considerable increase in the imports of nitrates, phosphates, and sulphur.

#### The Transit Trade.

Cette ranks second among French ports with reference to its international transit trade. The importance of the city, in its recognized rôle of port of entry for merchandise in transit to Switzerland, is shown by the following statistics: In 1914, 49,653 metric tons were transshipped; in 1915, 201,859 tons; and in 1916, 598,872 tons. Cereals constitute the most important item in this trade. The imports of wheat alone amounted to 436,272 tons. Although there are no statistics available, it is certain that by far the greater portion of this merchandise is imported from the United States. As public opinion in Switzerland seems to favor the maintenance of these relations after the war, particularly with regard to the importation of cereals, the prospects of the future growth of this trade appear promising.

#### Imports from the United States.

The following comparative statement shows the chief products imported directly into Cette from the United States during 1915 and 1916, the quantities being given in metric tons of 2,204.6 pounds:

Articles.	1915	1916	Articles.	1915	1916
Breadstuffs:	<i>Tons.</i>	<i>Tons.</i>		<i>Tons.</i>	<i>Tons.</i>
Barley.....		3,372	Sulphur.....		16,128
Oats.....	7,246	45,519	All other articles.....	12,068	12,625
Wheat.....	6,390	51,576	Total.....	80,309	183,148
Oils:					
Cottonseed.....		201			
Petroleum—					
Crude.....	75				
Refined and essence..	53,792	32,506			
Heavy, residue.....	738	928			

The important increase in the imports of cereals is due to short crops and the present abnormal conditions. Algeria, Morocco, and Argentina constitute the chief competitors of the United States in this trade. Exceptional facilities for the handling of petroleum account for the important quantities imported at this port. The United States furnished about 50 per cent of the total imports, the remainder being supplied by Persia and the Dutch East Indies. It will be noticed that there was a revival of sulphur imports from the United States. Nearly four-fifths of the sulphur imported originated in Sicily. As in 1915, no staves were imported from the United States. Small quantities were received from Italy but quite insufficient to meet the requirements. The prevailing high ocean-freight rates were practically prohibitive. After the war there will be an excellent market for American staves at this port.

#### Export Trade—Shipments to United States.

The general exports from this port amounted to 96,940 tons, as compared with 108,294 tons in 1915. Almost one-half of this merchandise consisted of coal shipped to Algeria or supplied to vessels for bunkering purposes.

The following table gives the quantity and value of the principal articles exported to the United States in 1915, 1916, and 1917, as declared at the American consular agency at Cette:

Articles.	1915		1916	
	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.
Chemicals, drugs, and dyes:				
Cuttlefish bones..... pounds.....	12, 876	\$1, 936	7, 493	\$1, 219
Tartar argols..... do.....	9, 190, 138	1, 049, 696	7, 690, 370	1, 250, 032
Verdigris..... do.....	33, 067	7, 109	15, 413	3, 611
Cigarette papers.....	13, 645	1, 469	.....	8, 870
Fruits, candied..... pounds.....	.....	1, 748	44, 625	12, 551
Paper stock..... do.....	3, 066, 169	34, 711	409, 231	4, 644
Vermuth..... } gallons.....	15, 574	31, 077	56, 673	63, 775
do..... } dozen quarts.....	16, 573			
Wines, still..... } gallons.....	3, 543	2, 197	4, 088	4, 193
All other articles.....	.....	30, 256	.....	11, 953
Total.....	.....	11, 150, 199	.....	1, 360, 878

[Statistics of the declared exports from Cette to the United States for 1917, transmitted by the consul at a later date, give the quantity and value of the principal items as follows: Tartar argols, 4,245,993 pounds and \$893,384; tartrate of lime, 255,684 pounds and \$46,698; candied fruits, 28,274 pounds and \$9,114; cigarette paper, \$6,432; vermouth, 16,982 dozen quarts and \$57,061; and wine lees, 348,739 pounds and \$17,622; total value, \$1,061,995.]

#### Wine the Principal Product.

The importance of the wine industry in this region is shown by the following figures of the production of the entire country and that of the Cette district: Total output, 538,931,409 gallons in 1915 and 883,844,700 gallons in 1916; output of Cette district, 252,462,495 gallons in 1915 and 500,524,183 gallons in 1916.

In the Herault Department viniculture is practically the only branch of agriculture of any importance. The vineyards have an area of 469,498 acres, or about 30 per cent of the total area of the Department.

In this district the crop of 1916, which was nearly double that of 1915, was considerably below the normal production. Nevertheless, the prices obtained for the crop of 1916 were higher than for that of the preceding year. In fact, it is interesting to note the upward trend of prices since the beginning of the war. Owing to a large crop in 1914, the prices of wine in the early part of 1915 were as low as 8 or 9 cents per gallon. At the beginning of 1916 prices varied between 40 and 45 cents per gallon, with an average for the calendar year of nearly 50 cents per gallon. It is expected that the average yield on the crop of 1916 will be from 50 to 55 cents per gallon.

The rising prices are due not only to short crops and the general increase in the cost of living, but also in a large measure to an increased demand for wine. The National Government has purchased large quantities of wine to be issued to the Army in addition to the ordinary rations. It is believed that the general use of wine in the Army during the war will tend to create a broader demand for the product in the future. In any case, present prospects indicate a continuation of very high prices.

The silkworm industry is of considerable importance in this district, particularly in the Department of the Gard. There are, however, no available statistics concerning the production in 1916.

#### The Mining Industry—Fisheries.

With the exception of coal, iron, and bauxite, the output of the mines of this district is of little importance. The production of these minerals in 1916 was considerably larger than in the preceding year, the production of coal being 2,022,278 metric tons in 1915 and 2,125,478 tons in 1916; iron ore, 265,533 tons in 1915 and 383,251 tons in 1916; and bauxite, 4,195 tons in 1915 and 23,412 tons in 1916.

The coal mines, which are the most important in southern France, are situated in the Department of the Gard. The iron and bauxite mines are located in the Department of the Pyrenees-Orientales and the Department of the Herault, respectively. The increase in the production of coal and iron ore is attributed to the German occupation of the important mines in northern and eastern France, the difficulty of importing, and the increased demand. The remarkable development of the hydroelectric industry in the Alps explains the increase in the production of bauxite. Prior to the war a certain quantity of bauxite was exported to the United States from this port.

In spite of unfavorable conditions the fishing industry enjoyed greater prosperity in 1916 than in 1915. Not only was the catch larger, but prices were also considerably higher. The following statement shows the catch at this port during 1914, 1915, and 1916:

Kind.	1914	1915	1916
Mackerel.....	3	95	85
Sardines.....	10	95	93
Tunny.....	250	100	61
Other fish.....	300	100	238
Oysters.....	5,500,000	850,000	539,000
Clovisses (clams).....	317,005	73,967	105,668
Mussels.....	89,817		143,708

The catch of lobsters was nearly 5 tons in 1916, as compared with 4 tons in 1915 and less than 1 ton in 1914.

#### **Movement of Vessels.**

The number of vessels entering and clearing at the port of Cette in 1913 was 3,159, with a net registered tonnage of 2,359,314; in 1915, 2,583 vessels, with a tonnage of 2,259,357; in 1916, 3,711 vessels, with a tonnage of 2,740,237. In 1916 the average net registered tonnage of the vessels frequenting the port was considerably less than in 1915. This is attributed to the fact that large numbers of small Spanish sailing vessels formerly engaged in domestic commerce were attracted to the international trade by the high freight rates. During the year 9,032 passengers were embarked or landed at this port, as compared with 3,273 in 1915. Nearly all these passengers were Spanish laborers attracted to this port by the prevailing high wages.

It should be noted that for the first time in more than 20 years the American flag was seen in this port. During the year 12 American vessels, with an aggregate net registered tonnage of 33,698, entered the port. All these ships were laden with cereals, with the exception of one with crude sulphur and another with petroleum.

The clearances for American ports during 1916 exceeded any previous year. In 1916, 81 vessels, with an aggregate net registered tonnage of 184,691, cleared from this port for the United States, a gain of 51 vessels and 102,010 tons over the preceding year. Most of these vessels were bound for Hampton Roads, Newport News, and New York, in the order indicated. The number and net registered tonnage under the various flags were as follows: British, 37 vessels and 89,777 tons; Norwegian, 12 vessels and 28,478 tons; American, 10 vessels and 27,594 tons; Spanish, 10 vessels and 18,751 tons; Greek, 4 vessels and 8,102 tons; French, 1 vessel and 2,280 tons; all other nationalities, 7 vessels and 9,709 tons. Owing to the lack of outward freight, the great majority of these vessels sailed in ballast.

In 1916, 70 vessels arrived from the United States with cargoes consisting chiefly of cereals, petroleum, and sulphur. The aggregate net registered tonnage of these vessels was 142,916; as compared with 104,093 in 1915.

#### **Harbor Improvements.**

Owing to the extraordinary increase in the volume of trade, the existing port facilities and equipment were quite inadequate. At a certain date 40 steamers and a large number of sailing vessels were waiting for berths at the quays. The delay thus incurred was a source of considerable loss. For this reason the National Government, by the decree of May 2, 1916, provided for an important extension of the port. In order to comprehend the importance of this project, it should be borne in mind that the port of Cette, which is a network of canals, is situated on a narrow strip of land between the Mediterranean Sea and the Thau Lake. The execution of the project involves the deepening of the existing canals and the construction of a ship channel available for ocean-going vessels along the shore of the lake. By this means the important industrial establishments in this locality will be placed in direct communication with the sea. It is believed by competent authorities that the impetus thus given to the

erection of factories along the shores of the Thau Lake will result in doubling the actual traffic of the port. It is expected that other important projects, which are now under discussion, will be adopted in the near future.

#### **Inland Transportation.**

Cette has excellent water communications with the interior. By means of the Midi Canal goods may be shipped to Bordeaux; on the other hand, by the Certe-Rhone Canal goods may be shipped to Lyons and northern France. As the result of improvements completed in 1916, the Rhone-Certe Canal is available for the large Rhone steamers as far as Aignes-Mortes. The necessary improvements between Aignes-Mortes and Certe can not be undertaken until after the war. The two important navigation companies which maintain a service on this canal have obtained the release of a large number of their employees from military service. These are the reasons which account for the important increase of traffic on this canal.

The situation as regards the Midi Canal is very unsatisfactory. No organized company operates on this canal, the service being maintained by the individual proprietors, who, in many cases, are at present in the army. Furthermore, many of the horses, utilized for traction purposes, have been requisitioned by the Government. In order to remedy these conditions, the Chambers of Commerce of Narbonne, Carcassonne, and Beziers plan to form a company in view of renting all the unutilized barges. By thus organizing the transportation, it is expected that more satisfactory results will be obtained.

The Paris, Lyons, and Mediterranean and the Midi Railways connect Certe with the interior. Statistics concerning the operation of these lines during 1916 are not available. Owing to the shortage of freight cars, the railways were unable to handle satisfactorily the increased traffic. These conditions were the source of considerable loss both to importers and consignees.

#### **Local Industries.**

Most of the important factories of Certe are engaged in the manufacture of chemical fertilizer or fungicides for the vineyards. In addition in this vicinity there exist two important sulphur refineries, one of which is an American concern. These establishments produced about 28,500 tons of refined sulphur during the business year, which ended on July 31, 1916.

Owing to the shortage of staves, due to the difficulty of importing large quantities under the present abnormal conditions, the output of wine casks has been very small. On the other hand, firms engaged in the rental of wine casks and tank cars enjoyed a very successful year.

Owing to favorable climatic conditions and the existence of numerous salt lakes and marshes, the production of salt is an important industry in this district. In normal times large quantities are exported to Newfoundland and Canada for the preparation of fish. Although this exportation has practically ceased, the industry enjoyed a particularly prosperous year. The National Government purchased large quantities of salt for the manufacture of war mate-

rial. The production in this district was 88,175 metric tons in 1914, 75,811 tons in 1915, and 136,155 tons in 1916.

As a result of its situation in the most important wine-producing region in France, this district is a large producer of tartar, a considerable portion of which is exported to the United States. In spite of the short wine crop in 1915, the production of tartar in 1916 was nearly equal that of the preceding year. This is attributed to the fact that a large portion of the production was extracted from the crop of 1914, which was particularly abundant.

At the instance of the French manufacturers of cream of tartar, the National Government, fearing a shortage of raw material as a consequence of the short crop of 1915, limited the exports for 1916 to 2,000 tons of crude tartar. This quantity was exported in the first four months of the year. Inasmuch as the French market was unable to absorb the surplus of crude tartar, the Government authorized the exportation of 2,500 tons in November and December, 1916.

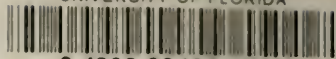
In 1916 the market was very irregular. Prices rose from 2.5 francs (\$0.48) per degree in January to 3.5 francs (\$0.67) in May. Inasmuch as no further quantities of crude tartar could be exported, local prices dropped to 2 francs (\$0.39) per degree. Toward the end of the year prices rose again to 2.6 francs (\$0.50), when authorization to export was again granted.

#### Cost of Living—Labor Conditions.

During 1916 the cost of living increased steadily. Government employees and persons dependent on a fixed income were particularly affected by these conditions. As the Government granted allowances for the high cost of living, the situation of the former was, to a certain extent, ameliorated.

Owing to its proximity to Spain, labor conditions in the Cette district were perhaps more satisfactory than in other parts of France. Even in times of peace an important portion of the wine crop is gathered by Spanish farm laborers, who are imported for this purpose. In the industrial establishments of this city Spanish labor, particularly unskilled, was also very generally employed. Notwithstanding these conditions, the wages of unskilled labor rose in almost the same proportions as the cost of living. The rise in the wages of skilled labor was much greater. In fact, had such labor been more abundant, the output of the chemical factories would have been considerably larger. Female labor was successfully employed to an increasing extent in commercial and banking establishments and in factories.

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